



# TeraTech News

## Tools for Programmers

We make you a computer hero every day

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April 2003  
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### CFC class sold out

TeraTech held a class on the new ColdFusion MX feature called CFCs this month. CFCs are ColdFusion Components and are ColdFusion's answer to object-orientation. The class was taught by ColdFusion author Hal Helms and included a copy of his book for all students. So many people came to the class that we had to move it from our usual training room to the DoubleTree hotel! We learned about how objects and procedural code differ and practiced coding in an O-O way. In addition to helping writing modular and reusable O-O style code, CFCs can be used to do Flash Remoting and Web Services in CFMX.



### Yes!Circle Member Spotlight

**YES!Circle** is a vibrant community of energetic, passionate, innovative entrepreneurs in all stages of business development, based in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.yescircle.org/>). Recently YES!Circle interviewed Michael Smith for their Member Spotlight section of their newsletter.



**Q:** What does TeraTech do?

**A:** TeraTech provides quality database and dynamic website programming. We program mainly in ColdFusion, SQL and Visual Basic. In business since 1989, TeraTech's clients include federal agencies, associations and prominent local businesses. TeraTech has developed sophisticated data-driven web sites for the Federal Drug Administration, Social

**“Our approach is to make a visual model of the finish program before we start coding...”**

Security Administration, The World Bank and Aggregate Industries. Typical services include system analysis and prototyping, database integration, system development and integration testing. In addition to ColdFusion, the TeraTech staff also has extensive experience in SQL databases, ASP, HTML, Access and FoxPro.

I have an MA and BA in Math from Cambridge University, England and graduated in the top 10 of his year. Prior to founding TeraTech, I worked at a big five UK computer consulting company both in the UK and Holland. I am up to date with modern software development methods and am a frequent speaker at national programming conferences and author about programming for national magazines.

**Q:** What do you like about programming?

**A:** I like creating software that meets the true needs of our clients and operates in a bug-free way. I have been programming for over 25 years and have seen many different ways to create software. To be honest many of them are not great at producing a program that the client can use off the bat. The challenge is to produce what people really want -- as opposed to what they initially say they want when they first meet a programmer. Our approach is to make a visual model of the finished program before we start coding, because we find that clients can always look at a program and explain what they like and dislike about it even if they can't explain precisely what they want in writing. This way they can give us this detailed feedback without having to spend all the money to build their application first.

**Q:** How did you get interested in coding quality?

**A:** When I started programming 25-years ago people would just start coding immediately rather than planning out a program. Unfortunately this lead to “spaghetti style” code that was hard to maintain and full of bugs – so I learned how important planning was. I also learnt a lot by maintaining someone else's code that

documentation and comments in code can save a lot of time when making changes to code! At the same time I studied a lot of books on software engineering and ways to improve software quality. At TeraTech we have a philosophy of continuous improvement for software quality. We hold weekly brainstorming meetings that come up with new ideas and teach new software techniques to all the staff. We also have written guideline documents for common processes such as database creation, coding style and testing methods. Of course the final measure of quality is how happy our clients are with our programs and how few bugs are reported after delivery. And I think this helped us win the ColdFusion Developers Journal Reader Choice Award for Best Consulting Company worldwide last year!



**Q:** Apart from creating high quality software, what else does TeraTech do?

**A:** We support several community organizations that help other programmers. We run the Maryland ColdFusion User Group and have organized eight successful national CF events including CFUN-2k with 700 attendees in the Washington DC area. Also TeraTech employees volunteer at ByteBack, a non-profit organization that provides computer training for unemployed and under-employed inner city residents. I write for Fusion Authority, the ColdFusion Developer Journal and the CPCUG monitor. I believe that work should be meaningful and fun too, so community support fits right in at TeraTech.

If your organization needs a interactive website or database application creating then contact Michael at [michael@teratech.com](mailto:michael@teratech.com) or read more about TeraTech at [www.teratech.com](http://www.teratech.com)



## Tip Twelve VSI: A Universal Motivator

Managers have always sought better ways to motivate their people and in these lean times it's even more important. Wouldn't it be great to find a universal motivator? One that works on employees at all levels, is activated and controlled by the manager's skill, as opposed to his budget, and has a really high success rate?

This isn't wishful thinking; the universal motivator is real. It's called vested self-interest (VSI) and you can make it work for you.

The key to using VSI is to think of it as ice cream. Ice cream comes in many flavors and ice cream gurus (whether they make it or eat it) are always looking for new ones. Vested self-interest also comes in many flavors and the wise manager takes the time to learn not only each of her people's favorite flavor, but also their second, third and even fourth choices (after all, even if the supermarket is out of NY Nut Fudge or Cherry Garcia people still buy *something*).

VSI is rarely about money or title. If it were, it wouldn't be within the manager's control. Here are some of the VSIs that seem to have a wide appeal:

- Appreciation: for little things people do, as well as the big ones.
- Celebrate uniqueness: people are like snowflakes; no two are identical and each has skills and abilities that contribute to success—the company's, the group's, and yours.
- Learning: besides tuition refunds and seminars, build a reference library and encourage its use; set aside one hour a week as a learning session, with each person in your group teaching something within their expertise.
- New challenges: develop ways to allow people to work on projects outside their expertise and within their interests.
- Encourage thinking: beyond their box, not just outside it, by having nothing be "out-of-bounds."
- Opportunities to grow: do everything within your power to foster growth—even if it means that they may eventually leave you.
- Awareness: take time to know your people, don't make assumptions or try shortcuts when identifying their VSIs.

RampUp Solutions is the manager's mentor for culture creation/infrastructure, retention, and hiring—all on a shoestring budget.

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### TERATECH CUSTOM PROGRAMMING

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